

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 L-03 CIAE-00
COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 FMC-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 SAL-01
CG-00 DLOS-06 OES-06 AGRE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01
SP-02 /055 W

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FM AMCONSUL WINNIPEG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1770
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMCONSUL CLAGARY
AMCONSUL TORONTO

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EWWT, CA
SUBJECT: ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY TOLLS -- PROVINCIAL VIEWS

REF: OTTAWA 4715 AND 4753

1. MANITOBA:

A. STAFF MEMBER ON MANITOBA TRANSPORTATION ECONOMICS COUNCIL TOLD CONOFF THAT POSSIBLE TOLL INCREASE IS NOT PRESENTLY A HOT ISSUE IN MANITOBA, AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT HAS NOT REVISED ITS 1975 POSITION CALLING FOR NO INCREASE IN TOLLS. HOWEVER, RESEARCH DONE SINCE THAT TIME WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED AND IF ANY INCREASE WOULD BE SUPPORTED FROM MANITOBA, MAXIMUM AMOUNT WOULD BE TO COVER INCREASED OPERATING COSTS ONLY. WHILE AWARE OF CURRENT FEDERAL EFFORTS TO RAISE TOLLS, SOURCE DOUBTED THAT MUCH WOULD BE ACCOMPLISHED UNTIL NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION IS FIRMLY IN PLACE, AND EARLIEST POSSIBLE EFFECT WOULD LIKELY BY 1978 SHIPPING YEAR.

B. ANOTHER SOURCE ON MANITOBA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL INDICATED INFORMALLY THAT PROVINCE IS "TOTALLY OPPOSED" IN PRINCIPLE TO ANY TOLL INCREASE, AND WOULD MUSTER AS STRONG A FRONT AS POSSIBLE IN OPPOSITION. THIS MIGHT

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INCLUDE COMMON EFFORT WITH OTHER WESTERN PROVINCES,

ALTHOUGH THIS SOURCE KNEW OF NO JOINT MOVES SO FAR IN THIS DIRECTION.

2. SASKATCHEWAN:

A. DIRECTOR OF SASKATCHEWAN TRANSPORTATION AGENCY SAID PROVINCE FIRMLY BELIEVES TOLLS SHOULD NOT GO UP, OTHERWISE THUNDER BAY "LOOKS PRETTY SICK" AS SHIPPING POINT FOR SASKATCHEWAN GRAIN. TOLL INCREASES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CONTENTIOUS ISSUE AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT KEEPS A "WALKING BRIEF" ON IT. IN ADDITION, SASKATCHEWAN MAINTAINS FAIRLY STRONG FRONT WITH OTHER PRAIRIE PROVINCES, AND LOOKS TO MANITOBA, IN PARTICULAR, TO TAKE LEAD ON THIS ISSUE.

B. ANOTHER CONTACT AT POLICY COORDINATION LEVEL IN SASKATCHEWAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UNIT READILY CONFIRMED STRENGTH OF PROVINCE'S OPPOSITION TO TOLL INCREASES.

3. COMMENT: WE HAVE SEEN NO PRESS COMMENT ABOUT THIS ISSUE IN RECENT MONTHS, AND AS INDICATED ABOVE, PROVINCIAL OPERATIVES IN THIS AREA DO NOT APPEAR TO BE SPECIALLY GEARED UP NOW TO MOUNT CONCERTED OPPOSITION TO CURRENT INITIATIVE BY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.
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